

Cable Television Advisory Committee Minutes November 1, 2007

I. Call to Order.

The meeting was called to order by the chair, Jackie Hontz, at 7:25 p.m. in the Administrator's Conference Room, Administration Center, 1300 Courthouse Road.

II. Roll Call.

The following members were present: Jackie Hontz, Danielle Davis, Terry Lottes, Thomas Kimbrell. Also present were Tami Watkins of Comcast Communications and Cathy Riddle representing the County.

III. Presentations by the Public.

Mr. Glenn Sullivan, 1003 Mountain View Road, said that when he inquired with Comcast about the cost to run cable to his daughter's home, which is located directly behind his, he was told that the cost would be \$1,500. He wants to know why there is a cost involved. He stated that everyone should receive the same services and not have some receive service free of charge and others charged.

Ms. Hontz stated that it is the homeowner's choice to live in an area that is underserved by public services and utilities.

Mr. Lottes stated that cable runs by Mr. Sullivan's property on Mountain View Road, and that Mr. Sullivan owns the property to the middle of the road.

Ms. Hontz stated that Mr. Sullivan has a complaint with Comcast and should try to negotiate with the company. She said that the County cannot force cable companies to run cable to each home, and that if the state forced cable companies to do this, they would go broke.

Ms. Watkins asked for Mr. Sullivan's address and stated that he needed a site survey at his property that would determine where the cable would go and the cost. She said she would contact him to set up an appointment for the survey.

Mr. Don Head, 2062 Aquia Drive, said that he experienced problems with the digital service on his cable channels. The digital channels would freeze intermittently. He called the Comcast call center in three states and talked to several supervisors and was told each time that something would be done to repair his service. On September 7, a technician came to his home and stated that the problem was in the head end. However, Mr. Head said that reps at the head end told him they were not aware of his problem. They dispatched a supervisor who came to his home. Mr. Head was repeatedly told that the problems would be fixed. He ended up calling the County and spoke with Ms. Riddle and stated that Ms. Riddle said she would call

Ms. Schuler at Comcast to inform her of the problem. After a week, Mr. Head said Ms. Riddle called him to find out if his problems had been fixed and Mr. Head stated that they were not. Ms. Shuler called him to discuss the problems.

Mr. Head stated that he also visited the Comcast office on Garrisonville Road, but that the staff there told him that they were not aware of his problems.

At the November 1, 2007 meeting, Mr. Head stated that problems with the digital channels seem to have been solved because the channels are no longer freezing. However, he stated that no one from Comcast has followed through with him Mr. Head on the situation.

He stated that he has filed a complaint with the FCC and the FTC.

Ms. Hontz asked Ms. Watkins to research Mr. Head's situation and get back to her in writing on what the problems were. Ms. Hontz also asked why Comcast customer service was so sporadic.

Ms. Watkins stated that typically complaints are relayed to Ms. Schuler and herself via local governments after customers have complained. She stated that Comcast needed to do a better job of training its customer service reps and improve its internal communications. She stated that she could not provide an exact reason for Mr. Head's problems with Comcast. She said that Comcast makes a point to call customers back.

Ms. Hontz stated that it appeared that Comcast techs in the field have a problem with getting information up to the next level of supervisors.

Mr. Head stated that many citizens might not be aware of the Cable Television Advisory Committee and how it could help them.

Mr. Sullivan stated that he didn't see anything on the County's cable channel about meetings being open to the public.

III. Members' concerns

Ms. Davis said that she called Comcast about Triple Play and was told that it would be rolled out soon. She stated that Comcast had told her previously that it would be rolled out in September and then in October. Comcast's recent response is that it would be rolled out in 2008.

Ms. Watkins stated that she would find out more information.

Ms. Davis notified the committee that her e-mail address has changed to ocleverone@aol.com.

Ms. Riddle asked Ms. Watkins the status of Comcast providing cable service to the Stafford Department of Utilities at 20 PGA Drive (the department recently moved). Ms. Watkins stated that she had not yet heard back from Ms. Schuler on this matter. Ms. Riddle also inquired about whether Ms. Watkins had spoken to Ann Rhodes about damages that Comcast equipment had

caused on her property. Ms. Riddle also inquired about providing service to Body Chery, a citizen who called requesting high speed Internet service.

Ms. Watkins did not have updates on these matters.

Mr. Kimbrell asked if there was a trouble number for Comcast.

Ms. Watkins said that there was a number and a customer service rep would provide it to a customer upon request.

Ms. Hontz stated that the Committee would like to receive statistics from Comcast and Cox to reflect additional information the Committee needed.

Ms. Watkins stated she had Comcast's 3rd Quarter Report.

Ms. Lottes stated that the Committee needed to review the franchise agreement and determine what numbers the cable companies are not reporting and give them time to comply with the agreement.

Ms. Watkins said that it would be helpful for the committee to draft a formal request.

Ms. Hontz and Mr. Lottes stated the information is clearly indicated in Section 7.08 A-2 and Section 7.08 B of the franchise agreement. Ms. Hontz requested that the County send an official letter to Comcast and Cox requesting the information. Ms. Riddle said she would write one for the County Administrator to sign and send it to the companies.

Ms. Hontz requested that for future meetings, the agenda should be revised so that the approval of minutes takes place after the public presentations.

Mr. Kimbrell asked Ms. Watkins for an update on Ms. Brown.

Ms. Watkins said that she had spoken with Ms. Brown and that Comcast would provide her with a check for \$75.

VI. Approval of Minutes.

The minutes of the September 27, 2007 regular meeting were approved unanimously by acclamation.

IV. Agenda Additions.

There were no agenda additions.

V. New Business.

Ms. Riddle stated that a representative from Verizon has requested a meeting with staff to discuss the company's plans in Stafford. Mr. Lottes has agreed to represent the committee at that meet. Ms. Davis stated that she would like to attend as well. The meeting is scheduled for 3 p.m. on November 20.

The members discussed the remaining meetings for 2007. The next meeting is scheduled for November 29, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. Members agreed to cancel the December meeting.

Members discussed the draft telecommunications commission charter. Ms. Riddle said that staff has provided the draft to Mr. Brian Grogan, Esq., who is the County's cable consultant for review. Mr. Grogan provided his edits to staff, who passed them to committee members. Staff also reviewed the draft with Joe Howard, County Attorney, and Jeff Harvey, Director of Planning and Zoning. Both Mr. Howard and Mr. Harvey told Ms. Riddle that there is a process in place for the establishment of cell towers within the County.

Mr. Lottes stated that Committee members have no great interest in determining the location of cell phone towers within the County. He said the committee would be concerned with Internet access, since that is a problem members have identified throughout the County.

Ms. Hontz moved to have the Committee to recognize the hard work that Mr. Kimbrell performed in drafting the charter; Ms. Davis seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Watkins stated that customers would receive a notice of a rate increase within the next few weeks.

VIII. Adjournment.

At 8:45 p.m., Mr. Lottes moved to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Davis seconded. The motion passed unanimously.